

Trinity 5
July 4, 2021
Luke 5:1-11

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

On the 4th of July, the country pauses for fireworks and picnics. But why? Well, for many, because we work hard and need a break. But, **what is the 4th of July?** It's our nation's day of independence. It is the day the Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776, a document few will read, but many will quote these words, ***"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."***

So, you are promised an existence. The right to life – being alive. **And you have the right to liberty**, meaning you are free. But, you are also given the pursuit of happiness. Well, what does this mean?

Is the pursuit of happiness a state of being, or does the word **"pursuit"** mean chasing after or seeking happiness? If you ask most people today, they would say the pursuit of happiness is an endeavor citizens **seek after**. Like being an overcomer, rags to riches story **through hard work, grit, and determination**. Here is how most of the world thinks and operates.

In the Gospel, there were no riches for Peter, no abundant catch of fish. What he did have in his possession were empty nets to be

cleaned. Cleaning the nets would not be enjoyable; it would be downright laborious and tidiest work, **yet, this fishing crew worked hard with no bounty to show for it.** Their pursuit of food and happiness led to the deep darkness of disappointment.

The deep darkness of disappointment remains a challenge for us as well. While we desire joy and happiness and work hard for it, **we often find ourselves unsatisfied in this life.** We grumble when others receive promotions we have so dearly worked towards. We are distraught over the happiness other families portray while **simply working vigorously to hold onto the family we have.** We grow depressed as sin enslaves us through the secret addictions of the heart. **Life is not fair,** and we are not always joyful.

We have developed a lack of satisfaction with our labors and vocations because **they do not provide or produce** the fruit we desire or the profits we expect. Yet, we are reminded through the interactions of Peter and Jesus how all things come from God's hand, even our freedom.

Solomon was the author of Psalm 127, a Psalm that speaks to the reality that the foundation of all our labors is God the Father. Solomon writes, ***“Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.”*** (V. 1) Our protection and care are derived from the presence of God. The wisdom of God's Word is the foundation of our homes and the labors we undertake.

But the world is fallen, unsatisfied, and anxious. Solomon writes again, ***"It is in vain that you rise early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep."***

(Psalm 127:2) The bread of anxious toil is the result of man's fall into sin and recalls the Words God spoke to Adam in the garden after the fall, ***"In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread."*** (Genesis 3:19)

No longer would labors be enjoyable, but thorns and thistles **would fill the earth and hamper the pursuits of man**. They would remind man of their dependence upon their Father in heaven and bring us to pray, ***"Give us this day our daily bread."***

These words are what Jesus is teaching Peter and the rest of his crew. Our daily bread and the needs for life, family, and country **all come through His gracious hand**. In the miraculous catch, Jesus reveals His authority over heaven and earth. He shows Himself as the God-Man.

Peter's confession then is our confession – ***"Depart from me, because I am a sinful man, Lord."*** It's a confession of awareness, unworthiness, and sinfulness. But, Peter was wrong in one aspect when he said, ***"Depart from me."*** In reality, he should have said, ***"Lord, come to me because I am a sinful man."***

To you as to Peter, Christ says, ***"Do not fear."*** Do not fear because, through His death and resurrection, your confession of sin is met with an announcement of absolution.

Through your baptism, you were plunged into the depths and darkness of Christ's death and raised to the glories of new life through His resurrection.

Our English translations always fail to provide a clear understanding of Jesus' words near the end of the Gospel as they often say, **"Do not be afraid. From now on, you will catch men."** Instead, the correct translation should be, **"From now on, you will catch men alive."**

To catch men alive takes us back to the beginning of our text, where crowds gathered upon Christ to **"hear the Word of God."**

Here is why pastors are sent into the **world to proclaim God's Word to you and those who** are in despair from the toils and arduous labors of life. To proclaim forgiveness in Christ's name **so that you are no longer slaves** to sin but to Christ Himself.

It's through the Word of God you seek to hear this day you are brought into the boat, **the ark of the Church to be kept safe throughout the deep** and dark days of this life. You are no longer dead but made alive.

Alive and able to stand beside your neighbor who received promotion before you with joy, support, and love for them. **Or by having the Word of God upon your lips** – speak it with gentleness that it may bring calm and peace to a family tired and frayed. Or if it is you that has been pursued by addiction, see the image of

Peter this day and join in His Confession - ***"Lord, come to me because I am a sinful man."***

Our pursuits of happiness are often met with tears and disappointment, **but one who seeks the Word of God** is led to the giver of every good and needful thing.

So seek Christ this day. Permit Him to be the builder of your home and the foundation for your labors in this life. Hold onto the truth of His Word so that it would guide and keep you in the one true faith and bring us into the eternal joys of heaven. +INJ+

*The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.
Amen.*

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